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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8651
INFO RUQMDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 3258
RUEHKK/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 7058
RUEHMG/AMEMBASSY MOGADISHU 8176
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1461
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0338
RUCJACC/USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL
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S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 6300

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: ET, PINR, MOPS, UR
SUBJECT: INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE

1. (S-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION HAS BEEN OBTAINED IN PART BY THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE, WHO HAS VISITED ERITREA AND TIGRE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING DECEMBER. OTHER PORTIONS OF THIS REPORT REFLECT INFORMATION OBTAINED BY DCM WHILE ACCOMPANYING CODES, KENNY, ON TRAVELS IN TIGRE AND HARARGE. A. ERITREA.

ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE SAYS THAT FROM DECEMBER 25 THROUGH MORNING OF DECEMBER 26, FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE HOURS, AN ETHIOPIAN HEAVY ARTILLERY BATTALION ENGAGED EPLF FORCES APPROXIMATELY 10 KMS SOUTH OF ASMARA. ON DECEMBER 27 THE EPLF ATTACKED ADIGWADAD, A TOWN SOUTH OF ASMARA, AND FAILED TOTAKE IT. ON DECEMBER 19 THE EPLF OCCUPIED FOR ON E

NIGHT THE ROAD JUNCTURE TOWN AT DEKEMEARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSASSINATING THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE WORKERS PARTY OF ETHIOPIA RESIDENT IN THAT TOWN. THEY SUCCEEDED. THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE WAS ABLE TO OBSERVE AN ANTONOV 12 (CUB B) MILITARY AIRCRAFT USING AEROFLOT MARKINGS. THE PLANE HAD FOUR PODS AND 25 EXTERNAL ANTENNAS. THE PLANE DEPARTS ASMARA AT APPROXIMATELY 0730 AND RETURNS AT APPROXIMATELY 1700

HOURS EACH DAY. IT IS THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE'S BELIEF THAT THIS PLANE IS DEVOTED STRICTLY TO SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE. THERE ARE SEVEN ADDITIONAL ANTONOV 12S (CUB A) STATIONED AT ASMARA. FOUR BRIGADES OF THE 19TH INFANTRY, PLUS THE HEADQUARTERS, HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO ERITREA TO BE STATIONED NORTH OF ASMARA IN THE AFABET AREA. IN THE SAME TIME FRAME, A BATTALION OF ETHIOPIAN ARMOR HAS BEEN MOVED IN DECEMBER FROM ASAB TO MERSA KUBA. IN THE AREA OF AFABET THE EPLF LAUNCHED SOME PROBING ATTACKS ON OR ABOUT DECEMBER 15.

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B. TIGRE.

ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE CONSIDERS THE CITY OF MAKELLE TO BE WELL DEFENDED. HE SAYS THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 1,000 REGULAR ETHIOPIAN TROOPS STATIONED IN AND AROUND MAKELLE. IN ADDITION, THE GARRISON HAS PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND TANKS WHICH ARE DUG IN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MAKELLE. FROM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE TANKS ARE DUG IN IT APPEARS THAT

THEY ARE BEING USED PRIMARILY FOR DEFENSIVE MOBILE ARTILLERY PIECES. THERE IS NO NIGHT PATROLLING BY ETHIOPIAN FORCES AND MOST OF THE FORCES APPEAR TO BE IN STATIC, DEFENSIVE POSITIONS. CURRENTLY MAYCHEW IS SERVED BY ARMED CONVOYS FROM MAKELLE AND/OR HELICOPTER FLIGHTS. A RUNWAY IS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN MAYCHEW IN LATE JANUARY/EARLY FEBRUARY; IT WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE SINGLE-ENGINE, LIGHT AIRCRAFT. BY THE END OF MARCH THE ETHIOPIANS HOPE TO HAVE A RUNWAY WHICH WILL TAKE THE EQUIVALENT OF C130S/ANTONOV 12S.

C. HARARGE.

ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE HAS INFORMATION, YET TO BE CONFIRMED, THAT THE ETHIOPIANS ARE FORMING AND TRAINING A MECHANIZED DIVISION IN THE JIJIGA AREA. DURING DCM'S TRIP TO JIJIGA WITH CODEL KENNEDY HE WAS TOLD THAT "A NEW MILITARY CAMP IS BEING SET UP NORTH OF JIJIGA." NO FURTHER DETAILS WERE ELICITED BUT IN FLYING INTO JIJIGA FROM DIRE DAWA

A LARGE CONCENTRATION OF MILITARY VEHICLES WAS OBSERVED. IN DIRE DAWA ON DECEMBER 21, UNLIKE ON PREVIOUS VISITS, THERE WAS NO RPT NO CUBAN PRESENCE OBSERVED IN THE CITY, EITHER IN THE RESTAURANTS OR ON THE STREETS. AT APPROXIMATELY 1900 HOURS, ON A TRIP FROM DIRE DAWA BY ROAD, SOUTH, ALONG THE RAILWAY TRACKS, FOR APPROXIMATELY 25 KMS., NO MILITARY OR POLICE SECURITY WAS VISIBLE.

3. WE HAVE HEARD FROM VARIOUS SOURCES THAT THERE IS A SPECIAL UNIT OF SOVIET MILITARY IN AND AROUND ADDIS ABABA. THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE HAS ALSO HEARD THIS REPORT AND HIS SOURCES STATE THERE ARE 300 SPECIAL SOVIET FORCES AKA RAIDONNIKI. THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE AND THE EMBASSY'S MSG NCOIC HAVE SEEN THESE NEW SOVIETS AND DESCRIBE THEM AS IN EXCELLENT PHYSICAL CONDITION, HEIGHT APPROXIMATELY 5 FEET-EIGHT INCHES TO SIX FEET, CREWCUT HAIRCUTS. SOME OF THOSE OBSERVED SPEAK AMHARIC. AN AMERICAN EMPLOYEE OF THE EMBASSY WHO LIVES NEAR THE OLD AIRPORT REPORTS THAT THAT INSTALLATION APPEARS RECENTLY TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE SOVIET MILITARY. THEY STAND GUARD AT ITS GATE AND TRUCKS CARRYING SOVIET SOLDIERS REGULARLY ENTER AND LEAVE THE OLD AIRPORT COMPOUND.

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END OF MESSAGE

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